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SOLUTION TO THE CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS (HRM) IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NANDI COUNTY, KENYA

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these challenges are met head-on to make the workplace more settled and peaceful for everyone. The principals as human resource managers should embrace change which of course is not limited to these challenges. This is because their roles keep on changing from the administrative and teaching roles to human resource roles. This will help them sustain adverse consequences resulting from there changing roles if poorly managed. This study is set to establish the ways in which School Principals and other stakeholders can curb the increasing challenges faced by them as HRMs. The study used a Survey research design with a target population of 140 secondary school principals drawn from Nandi County. Census sampling was used to select the study sample. Data collection was done using self-administered questionnaire after which Coding of responses was done using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for windows Version 16. Analysis of the data was done through descriptive statistics. Data was presented in form of frequency tables and charts.

ABSTRACT

With the ongoing changes in Human Resources Management (HRM), it's important that managers, executives and HR employees, specifically, be aware of the challenges that today's HRM team may face. This should then be coupled with the solutions to containing these challenges. While there are certainly other issues, it is common to most of any type of business or size of company to having policies in place to ensure

1. Introduction

Human resource is a relatively modern management term, coined in the 1960s. The origin of the function arose in organizations that introduced 'welfare management' practices which also adopted the principles of 'scientific management'. From these terms emerged a largely administrative management activity coordinating a range of worker related processes and becoming known, in time as the 'personnel function'. Human resources progressively became the more usual name for this function, in the first instance in the United States as well as multinational corporations,

reflecting the adoption of a more quantitative as well as strategic approach to workforce management, demanded by corporate management and the greater competitiveness for limited and highly skilled workers (Nadra, 1984).

In order to effectively manage workplace diversity, a HR Manager needs to change from an ethnocentric view ("our way is the best way") to a culturally relative perspective ("let's take the best of a variety of ways")(Cox, 1992). This shift in philosophy has to be ingrained in

the managerial framework of the HR Manager in his/her planning, organizing, leading and controlling of organizational resources. There are several best practices that a HR manager can adopt in ensuring effective management of workplace diversity in order to attain organizational goals.

One of the best ways to handle workplace diversity issues is through initiating a diversity Mentoring Program. This could entail involving different departmental managers in a mentoring program to coach and provide feedback to employees who are different from them. In order for the program to run successfully, it is wise to provide practical training for these managers or seek help from consultants and experts in this field. Usually, such a program will encourage an organization's members to air their opinions and learn how to resolve conflicts due to their diversity. More importantly, a Diversity Mentoring Program seeks to encourage members to move beyond their own cultural frame of reference to recognize and take full advantage of the productivity potential inherent in a diverse population (Cox 1993; Thomas, 1992).

Many companies are now realizing the advantages of a diverse workplace. More companies are going global in their market expansions either physically or virtually (E-commerce-related companies), there is a necessity to employ diverse talents to understand the various positions of the market. For example, when China was opening up its markets and exporting their products globally in the late 1980s, the Chinese companies (such as China's electronic giants like Haier) were seeking the marketing expertise of Singaporeans. This is because Singapore's marketing talents were able to understand the local China markets relatively well, almost 75% of Singaporeans are of Chinese descent and as well as being attuned to the markets in the West due to Singapore's open economic policies and English language abilities (Paauwe, 2004).

With this trend in place, a HR Manager must be able to organize the pool of diverse talents

strategically for the organization. They must consider how a diverse workforce can enable the company to attain new markets and other organizational goals in order to harness the full potential of workplace diversity. An organization that sees the existence of a diverse workforce as an organizational asset rather than a liability would indirectly help the organization to positively take in its stride some of the less positive aspects of workforce diversity.

A HR Manager needs to advocate a diverse workforce by making diversity evident at all organizational levels. Otherwise, some employees will quickly conclude that there is no future for them in the company. As the HR Manager, it is pertinent to show respect for diversity issues and promote clear and positive responses to them. He/she must also show a high level of commitment and be able to resolve issues of workplace diversity in an ethical and responsible manner.

A HR Manager must conduct regular organizational assessments on issues like pay, benefits, work environment, management and promotional opportunities to assess the progress over the long term. There is also a need to develop appropriate measuring tools to measure the impact of diversity initiatives at the organization through organization-wide feedback surveys and other methods. Without proper control and evaluation, some of these diversity initiatives may just spit out, without resolving any real problems that may surface due to workplace diversity.

Workplace motivation can be defined as the influence that makes us do things to achieve organizational goals. This is a result of our individual needs being satisfied (or met) so that we are motivated to complete organizational tasks effectively. As these needs vary from person to person, an organization must be able to utilize different motivational tools to encourage their employees to put in the required effort and increase productivity for the company. In our changing workplace and competitive market environments, motivated employees and their contributions are the necessary currency for an

organization's survival and success. Motivational factors in an organizational context include working environment, job characteristics, and appropriate organizational reward system (Torrington, 1995).

The development of an appropriate organizational reward system is probably one of the strongest motivational factors. This can influence both job satisfaction and employee motivation. The reward system affects job satisfaction by making the employee more comfortable and contented as a result of the rewards received. The reward system influences motivation primarily through the perceived value of the rewards and their contingency on performance (Harrison, Rosemary, Kessels and Joseph 2004).

Many of the day-to-day management issues are very practical, but of critical importance. In most cases, working to reduce teacher absenteeism is a major priority (Beardwell, Claydon and Holden 2004); Condy, 1998); and Halliday, 1999). In Kenya, principals viewed school fees and money matters as their major concerns (Kitavi, and Westhuizen, 1997). In another study carried out in Nigeria, principals ranked the responsibilities they performed in the following order: staff and students' management, liaison officer, coordinating and financial management (Akpa, 1990).

The study discovered that academic and instructional activities including curriculum development, teaching and instructional supervision were treated with less vigor. This finding was further supported by Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere, & Leu, (2007) who found that principals in most African countries do not have regard for instructional supervision and thus viewed it as not part of their duties. Though the principals focus more on administrative parts of their roles, there is still strong evidence to show that they play an important part in ensuring instructional quality as part of the administrative functions of the school. Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, (2001) contends that secondary school principals need to be given the tools to reflect on the priorities, the areas of conflict and

tension, the ethical issues, as well as values, expectations, and professional issues about teaching and learning. Therefore, an important skill that all school leaders require is strategic thinking. This should play a prominent role in all training programs for school leadership.

The head of every secondary school in Nigeria is the Principal, who is regarded as the Chief Executive and responsible for all that happens in the school (Oyedeji & Fasasi, 2006). As the Chief Executive, the Principal assigns duties to those who could perform the duties, though all responsibilities still reside in him/her as the accounting officer.

However, Obemeata (1984) sees the Principal as a manager, administrator, an exemplary leader, counselor, a public officer, a nurse and even a messenger. In specific terms, Arikewuyo (1999) viewed the functions of the Principal as follow; providing leadership for curriculum development, providing leadership for instruction improvement, creating an environment conducive for the realization of human potentials, influencing the behavior of staff members and supervising instructional activities in the school system.

The functions of the Principal to include the following: Manage and deploy school resources efficiently, allocate school accommodation appropriately, ensure satisfactory standards of maintenance and cleanliness of school facilities, organize staff development in school, guide curriculum implementation and change, manage the developmental appraisal system, whole school evaluation and new integrated quality management system, create a professional ethos within the school by involving staff members in decision making, and manage restructuring and redeployment of teachers (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1993).

In carrying out these functions, Wong, K. & Ng, H. (2003) contended that Principals are to demonstrate their ability to lead through: Professional knowledge, organizational and administrative competence, ability to work out a good school policy and put it into effect skill in the delegation of authority, ability to

understand the professional problems of teachers and give professional guidance and ability to establish good working relationships with staff and parents. Aside, the functions outlined above, studies have also been conducted on how principals have been performing these roles. In spite of them carrying out these human resource roles, they have not been trained on the same.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Nandi County among the existing 140 public secondary school principals. A Survey research design was used in this study because it encompassed a larger coverage area. Therefore it was suitable for the study since all the principals of secondary schools in Nandi County were involved. The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires. Secondary data which included analysis of

previous studies were used to depict pertinent issues as they existed before the study and as a basis to confirm or contrast findings of the study. Questionnaires were used as research tools to collect data from the sampled respondents. Data cleaning, coding, validation, error checking exploratory analysis, tabulation and finally statistical analysis was done. The analysis was centered on generating descriptive statistical outputs. Descriptive statistical analysis technique was used in data analysis. Presentation of data was done quantitatively in form of tables, graphs and pie-charts to illustrate the description and explanations of the research findings.

3. Results

The study sought to establish solutions to the challenges facing school principals as human resource managers (HRM) in secondary schools in Nandi County, Kenya. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Solutions to HRM challenges

Way forward		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Freq/ %
HRM courses should be introduced in all teacher training colleges	N	-	9	8	75	29	121
	%	0	7.4	6.6	62	24	100
The ministry of education should provide the principals of secondary schools with in-service courses on HRM after appointment	N	0	5	6	35	75	121
	%	0	4.1	5	28.9	62	100
The ministry of education should create offices for HR managers in the learning institution	N	4	2	8	42	65	121
	%	3.3	1.7	6.6	34.7	53.7	100

As shown in Table 1, the respondents gave various ways of solving challenges faced by principals as human resource managers. First, the principals are in agreement that human resource courses ought to be introduced in all Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) 104 (86.0%). This will equip the trainee with the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge on issues pertaining management of human resource. Secondly, there is need of in-service courses

for already appointed principals 110 (90.9%). This is particularly to equip them with knowledge and skills on HRM. Lastly, the Ministry of Education should create offices for HR managers in the learning institution 107(88.4%) so that they give support services to the principal's office and other offices within the school. This implies that the principals really need the skills and knowledge as indicated by the high

percentages on the three items on the way forward.

4. Conclusion

The main objective of this paper was to explore ways of solving challenges faced by School principals as human resource managers. The findings indicated that the principals are in agreement that human resource courses ought to be introduced in all teacher training colleges. This will equip the trainee with the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge on issues pertaining management of human resource. Secondly, there is need of in-service courses for already appointed principals. This is particularly to equip them with knowledge and skills on HRM. Principals are the right candidate to play the functions of both leadership and management in their respective schools (Achilles, Keedy, & High, 1999). They head to ensure improvement of curriculum, instruction and other pertinent elements of the school. The study also concludes that there is need by the Ministry of Education to create offices for HR managers in the learning institution so that they give support services to the principal's office and other offices within the school. The Principals therefore actually require skills and knowledge as indicated by the high percentages in the papers findings so as to curb the many challenges in carrying out their roles as HR Managers.

5. Recommendation

The study recommends provision for room to equip them with HRM skills either in full before appointment as principals or in-service courses should be compulsory and immediately provided after their appointment. The ministry of education should provide the principals of secondary schools with in-services courses on HRM after appointment. This should be at the level of diploma or degrees in order to equip them fully with adequate knowledge and skills required.

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